Trans-Lake Washington Project
Washington State Department of Transportation
Sound Transit

Date: **October 16, 2000**

To: **Executive Committee**

From: **Amy Grotefendt**

Subject: **Input from Technical and Advisory Committees Regarding First-Level Screening Results**

In the packet of materials for the October 25 Executive Committee meeting, you are receiving the results of the first-level screening by the Technical Committee. These results include that committee's recommendations for which alternatives to move forward for further development and evaluation. Both the Technical and Advisory committees spent a great deal of time asking questions and discussing each of the alternatives. You will see the final recommendations of the Technical Committee as a Yes or No to move forward, but not the substance of the discussion. The memo below tries to convey some of that substance, and in particular, to discuss where there was some disagreement from either Technical or Advisory Committee members. We suggest that you read through these issues and the results prior to the October 25 meeting, talk to your Technical and Advisory committee representatives, and come prepared to discuss each of the alternatives and agree which ones should move forward. *Please note that the issues described below are not to be representative of a consensus decision by the committees, but rather summarize key issues raised by individual committee members during the discussion.*

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE – KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

B1 – Minimum Footprint

- Would wider (but still substandard) shoulders really increase effectiveness?
- What else could be done to improve the effectiveness of this alternative?
- How different is this from the No Action alternative?

B2—HOV Lanes

- When this alternative is further evaluated, consider impact of changing assumption to 2+ HOV lanes.
- When this alternative is further evaluated, information should be provided on how many cars would be using HOV lanes. Are there assumptions for how social behavior will be changed?
- If congestion is not significantly reduced with this alternative, does it merit a higher effectiveness rating?
- The impacts of this alternative might not be described accurately. For example, there is direct HOV access on 84th right now and cut-through traffic has not decreased.

B3 – GP and HOV Lanes

- This alternative will need to be seriously evaluated in terms of the ability to add additional traffic to I-5. This appears to be a serious problem with this alternative.
- How this alternative is designed may impact how it rates compared to other alternatives.
- If an additional general purpose lane is added, traffic in the Montlake area will increase, not decrease.
- Will future definitions of this alternative specify how it will join into the express lanes, connect to I-5 mainly, or to other roads?

B4 – GP Lanes

- This alternative may rank lower because it does not address all users of the transportation system.
- How will this alternative address the purpose and need statement?
- This alternative may increase the impact on neighborhoods by increasing the amount of traffic trying to enter SR 520.
- When evaluating this alternative, look at the amount of freight carried on SR 520 versus I-90.

B5 – Bus Only Lanes (plus van pools)

- This title should be changed to include van pools as they would be able to use the same roadway.
- There is an opportunity to coordinate with the I-405 Corridor Program on this alternative.
- Clarify that this is not a barrier separated lane.
- This should move forward, but it may not result in a reasonable mode split.
- This may help to meet demand due to flexibility of mode.
- This alternative may decrease in effectiveness compared to adding general purpose lanes if mobility is weighted higher than compatibility with regional plans.

B6 – HOV Tunnel

- This alternative appears to be the same as B2 with the addition of a tunnel as a mitigation measure. This may not need to be carried forward as a separate alternative.
- Impacts associated with this should be elaborated for the Executive Committee.
- The effectiveness of this alternative should be lowered compared to adding general purpose lanes on the existing structure.

B7 – New Freeway and Bridge

- Origin and destination data during the previous study showed the demand for travel would be met by this alternative. Having more options for trans-lake mobility should improve mobility.
- This alternative would allow transition to a new SR 520 bridge without closing an entire corridor; this may be a useful alternative in that regard.
- How this alternative impacts local arterials may impact the corridor-level decision.

B9 – Close SR 520 Interchanges Between I-5 and I-405

- This effectiveness rating should be increased because it would reduce merging and increase safety, potentially in combination with other alternatives later.

B10 – Modify HOV Operations

- Changing the existing HOV lanes on SR 520 to 2+ would not significantly add to their effectiveness.
- Should this be an alternative under TDM?

- This should be added as an option to B2.

C1 – HCT in SR 520 Corridor

- In some places on the eastside, route variations could result in the corridor not being widened.
- Clarify that the HCT alternatives are not being compared to freeway alternatives at this point in the process.

C2 – HCT in I-90 Corridor

- This alternative needs to clearly explain that it is addressing improving mobility in the SR 520 corridor, as stated in the purpose and need statement.
- What will be the No Action alternative for the I-90 corridor?
- The HCT technology used may change what impacts result from this alternative.
- A clear definition of high capacity transit technology is needed.

C3 – Mid-Lake Corridor

- All HCT crossings should serve the same areas on the east side of the lake.
- This alternative should be coordinated with the I-405 Corridor Program.
- It is difficult to rate the impacts of alternatives when the exact route and technology are not known.

C.4.1 – New North Lake Corridor: Sand Point/Juanita/Kirkland
C.4.2 – New North Lake Corridor: Madison to Kirkland

- These alternatives will give commuters flexibility and increase their effectiveness.
- The impacts should not be rated as they are unknown at this time.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE – KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

B1 – Minimum Footprint

- This alternative is very similar to No Action; what is being achieved by carrying it forward?
- The difference between this alternative and No Action includes the addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and thus it should be carried forward.

B2 – HOV Lanes

- The evaluation of the alternative should identify that adding HOV lanes results in an increase in single occupancy vehicles.

B3 – GP and HOV Lanes

- The evaluation of the alternative should identify that adding HOV lanes results in an increase in single occupancy vehicles.
- There is disagreement about whether this alternative will result in a decrease in cut-through traffic as stated in the environmental impacts summary.
- How do connections to I-5 influence the effectiveness of this alternative?
- The evaluation should also consider the relief provided by adding general purpose lanes and relieving current bottlenecks, such as entering SR 520 from I-5 southbound.
- There is a need to coordinate with other transportation planning projects when evaluating this alternative.

B4 -- GP Lanes

- This alternative is not compatible with current local and regional plans and should not be carried forward.

- While some might not like this alternative, it should be carried forward at this point.
- The project cannot assume that the public does not want general purpose lanes; the November election will provide some sense of what the public does want.

B5 – Bus Only Lanes (plus van pools)

- Will HOT lanes be considered as part of this alternative?
- How is this different from the B2 alternative (HOV lanes)? Should they be considered together?

C1 – HCT in SR 520 Corridor

- Bicycle and pedestrian lanes should be added to this alternative.
- Is there a way to look at the most effective feeder routes for this alternative?
- The project should look at what revisions are being proposed for the I-90 corridor and should consider the addition of HOV lanes on I-90 in the Trans-Lake Washington EIS.

C2 – HCT in I-90 Corridor

- There is concern about the potential impact of this alternative.

C3 – Mid-Lake Corridor (between SR 520 and I-90)

- This alternative will be moving people only from downtown Seattle to downtown Bellevue and any new route should serve a broader population.
- Clarify that this route will include connections to places other than the downtown cores.

C.4.1 – New North Lake Corridor: Sand Point/Juanita/Kirkland
C.4.2. – New North Lake Corridor: Madison to Kirkland

- One member would prefer to see these alternatives move forward rather than C3.

D1 – Increase Effectiveness/Investment in TDM

- The effectiveness of land use changes cannot be measured with the transportation effectiveness criteria currently outlined in the screening results.
- There was a suggestion to look for other land use alternatives that were not necessarily thought of by the Study Committee.
- Separate land use from TDM measures; create a new alternative, D2.